

9. A NEW WHITE-THROATED RACE OF THE BABBLER
DUMETIA HYPERYTHRA

Stuart Baker in the Fauna (Vol. I, p. 228) accepted two species in the genus *Dumetia*:

D. hyperythra Franklin, 1831, *P.Z.S.*: 118, (Ganges near Benares), with chin and throat rufous, and

D. albogularis Blyth, 1847, *J.A.S.B.* 16: 453, 'southern India', restricted to Mysore by Baker, 1921, Handlist: 24, with chin and throat white.

In the white-throated group he included Harington's race *abuensis* (1915, *JBNHS* 23: 429) from Mt. Abu, which differed from *albogularis* in having the whole crown chestnut and the underparts much darker. This form was stated as occurring from Mt. Abu and Deesa, down to Mahableshtar.

Whistler examined this question at length [Eastern Ghats Report (*JBNHS* 35: 743-5)], and rightly opined that the evidence for *hyperythra* and *albogularis* both occurring in the same area was unsatisfactory. He therefore reduced the latter to a race of *hyperythra*. He synonymised *abuensis* with *albogularis* as being inseparable, thus expanding the latter's distribution to 'a strip of country down western India from Mt. Abu and Deesa extending through Baroda, Western Khandesh (Dhulia, Nandurbar, Khondabhari Ghat), Nasik and the whole range of the Sahyadris (Khandala & Mahableshtar) with their adjoining districts, to the south of the Peninsula'. He drew attention to Fairbanks's statement that it (the white-throated form) is very definitely a bird of the Ghats which did not extend into the Deccan tableland. In south Konkan and Kanara it was scarce though apparently commoner in Mysore where, in the valley of the Kistna, it occurred directly opposite the southernmost limit of the typical race (*hyperythra*). South of this *albogularis* was again widely, though not uniformly, distributed in the rest of the Peninsula and Ceylon. (Later the birds from Ceylon were separated as *D. h. phillipsi* by Whistler, as having a heavier bill.)

Whistler also changed the type locality of *albogularis* from 'Mysore' in the Fauna to 'Taipoor Pass and near Jaulna'. Curiously the original reference quoted by him (1847, *J.A.S.B.* 16: 453) does not mention these places. Blyth there writes of the white-throated form of *Dumetia hyperythra*: 'I find that *T. hyperythra* of Jerdon inhabiting India and Ceylon differs from true *hyperythra* which I obtained from the Midnapore jungles in having the chin and throat white Should it be considered separable as a species from its representative in Southern India, the latter may stand as *M.* (?)

albogularis nobis.' The name *albogularis* therefore obviously applied to the south Indian form which was restricted to Mysore by Stuart Baker in the Handlist and Fauna. This removes a considerable source of ambiguity and confusion, particularly if the geographical variations listed in this note are accepted.

In subsequent years the position as interpreted by Whistler stood. But I recently had occasion to handle a few specimens and was struck by the very pronounced rufous cap which separated birds from the north-western parts of its range from others in peninsular India. The feathers of the forehead are longer and a brighter chestnut, in which the pale shafts show up as distinct streaks. Mr. Sálím Ali who obtained several specimens in his Gujarat Survey agrees with me that *abuensis* of Harington is a perfectly good race which extends along the foothills and coastal plains as far south as Bombay city.

In the course of the same investigation I noticed that some birds from Khandala c. 2000 ft., Western Ghats, were markedly different from others, and was fortunately able to supplement the series with several additional specimens from that area. These differ from both *abuensis* and *albogularis* in the following characters:

1. The upper parts are suffused with olive and lack the rufous tinge of the other two races.

2. The feathers on the forehead form a cap smaller than that in *abuensis* and which is a dark brown rather than chestnut. The pale shafts to these feathers are also less prominent than in *abuensis*.

3. As a series the rufous underparts are duller than in *abuensis* and *albogularis*.

4. The upper mandible is dark horny or blackish as against yellow, which latter, incidentally, has been given as one of the characters of the genus.

5. The legs, feet, and claws have a greenish tinge as against yellow.

Differences 4 and 5 were not noted in the field; in made-up skins the colour of the bill and legs enables one readily to pick out specimens of the new form from a mixed lot. The colour of the bill and feet should, I believe, be possible to tell in the field. Its measurements do not differ from those of the other races.

On 20th May 1959, Br. Novarro obtained a juvenile with a half grown tail at Khandala. The colours of the bill, legs and feet agree with those of the adults, but there is *no* trace of any cap on the forehead.

On the above differences I have no hesitation in describing a new race.

***Dumetia hyperythra navarroi* subsp. nov.**

Type: A male collected by Br. Navarro at Khandala c. 2000 ft., Western Ghats, Poona District, Bombay State, on 22-5-1958. *B.N.H.S.* Coll. No. 20120.

Named in honour of Br. A. Navarro, S.J., of St. Xavier's High School, Bombay, who procured the specimens at Khandala, and who has in other ways helped the Society with ornithological and other material over the last 30 years.

Four more from Khandala, two from Kihim (Alibag Taluka, Kolaba District), and one from Padhga (Bhiwandi Taluka, Thana District), have all the characters on which this race is described.

Distribution: Four specimens from Bombay and Salsette Islands are nearer *abuensis*. The two specimens from Kihim, which is on the mainland about 6 miles south across Bombay harbour, are definitely *navarroi*. Of two collected around Bhiwandi, which is on the mainland 20 miles north of Bombay, only one has all the characters, while the other may pass as *abuensis* except for the colour of the bill and legs. The distribution in the Konkan, as also around Khandala, needs to be worked out and it could form the basis of an interesting ecological study.

While handling the *Dumetias* in the Bombay collection it was apparent that there were several variations in the forms without the white throat, i.e. *hyperythra*. The scarcity of fresh material deters one from attempting to separate any geographical forms, but they will no doubt repay further taxonomical study.

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10. ON THE VALIDITY OF *HARPACTES ERYTHROCEPHALUS*
HODGSONI (GOULD) [AVES: TROGONIDAE]

(With a text-figure)

The Redheaded Trogon was first described as *Trogon erythrocephalus* by Gould (1834) from specimen(s) obtained in Rangoon, Burma. The Himalayan bird from Nepal was later separated by him (1838) as *Trogon (Harpactes) hodgsoni*. The indiscriminate use